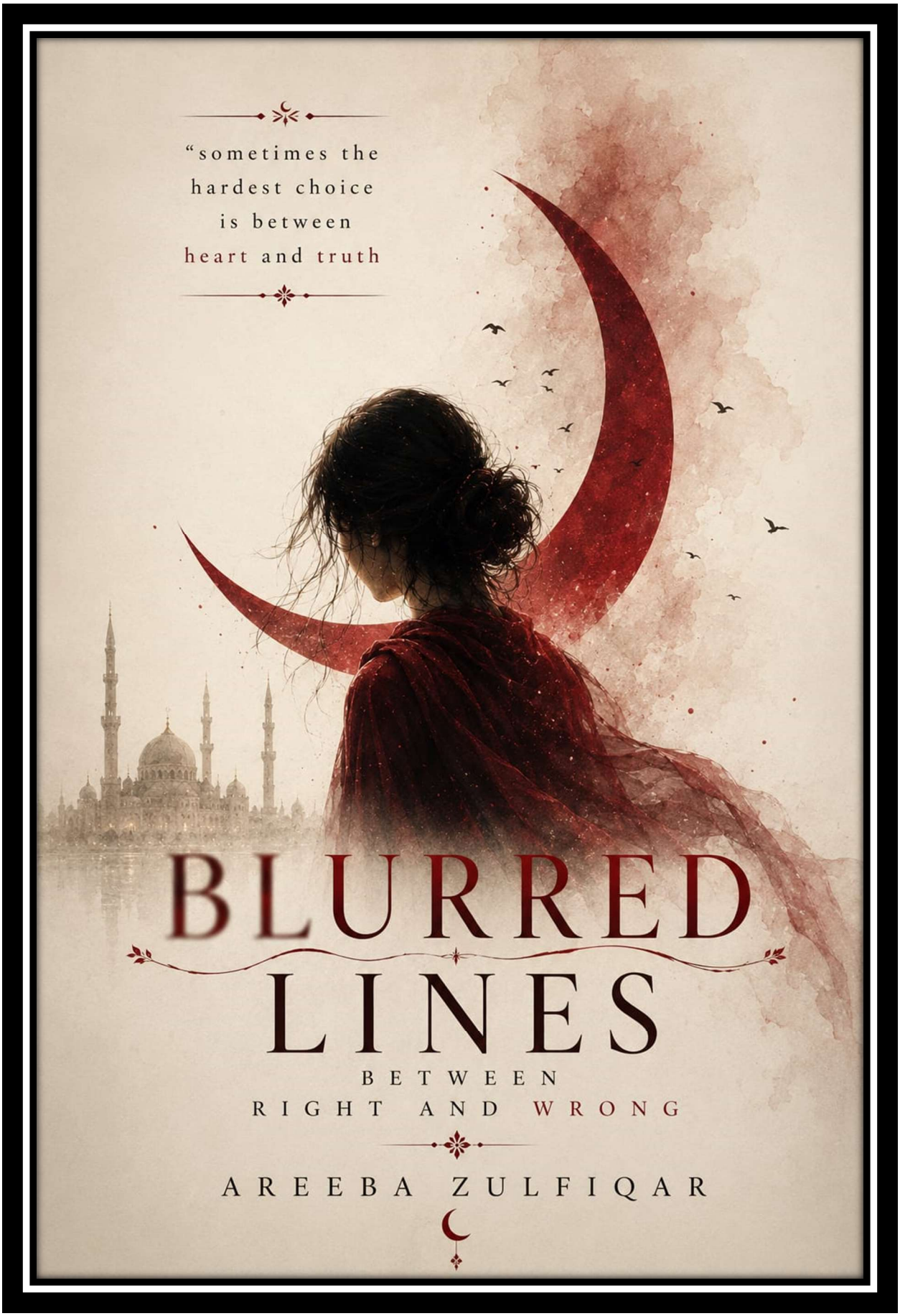
"sometimes the
hardest choice
is between
heart and truth
BLURRED
LINES
BETWEEN
RIGHT AND WRONG
AREEBA ZULFIQAR

In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful

BLURRED LINES BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG

Sometimes the hardest choice is between the heart and the truth.

AREEBA ZULFIQAR

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Blurred Lines Between Right and Wrong

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Written by **Areeba Zulfiqar**

Typing and formatting: **Ayesha Zulfiqar**

Blog:**AreebaZulfiqar**
https://thebyareebaofficial.blogspot.com

"The world may blur the lines between right and wrong, but our conscience still knows where they are."

Dedication

For my beloved Ayaz Mamu

Thank you for believing in me, encouraging me, and reminding me that my thoughts were worth putting into words.

This book is dedicated to you, with love and gratitude.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a common belief that books are written by people who have answers. This is not one of those books. I did not write these pages because I understood the world. I wrote them because I had questions. Questions that stayed with me long after conversations ended. Questions that appeared while watching people. Questions that had no simple answers. As I looked around, I noticed something that I could not ignore. The world seemed to be changing. Success was often admired more than honesty. Appearances sometimes mattered more than reality. People defended what was convenient instead of what was right. Kindness was mistaken for weakness. Loyalty became rare. Truth often depended on who was telling the story.

The more I observed, the more one thought stayed with me:

Have the lines between right and wrong become blurred?

This book is not an attempt to judge people. It is not a guide that promises perfect answers. Life is far more complicated than that. Instead, think of these chapters as conversations. Conversations about the choices we make. The values we slowly lose. The questions we avoid. And the person we become through all of them. Some of these pages may make you agree. Others may make you disagree. That is perfectly fine.

In fact, I hope they do.

Because the purpose of this book is not to tell you what to think. It is to encourage you to think. If, at any point while reading, you find yourself pausing to reflect on your own life, then these pages have already served their purpose.

As you turn these pages, I ask only one thing. Read with an open mind. Question my thoughts. Question your own. And do not be afraid of difficult questions. Sometimes they lead us closer to the truth than easy answers ever could.

Thank you for choosing to spend your time with this book. I hope that when you reach the final page, you will not simply close it. I hope you will carry at least one question with you. Because sometimes, the beginning of wisdom is not having the right answer.

It is having the courage to ask the right question.

CHAPTER:01

The World has Changed

The world today is faster than ever. Everyone is running but no one pauses to ask: Why? Where are we all trying to go?

If you stand in the middle of a busy metro station or a corporate sector at 9:00 AM you will see a number of faces. All moving with an intense agency, eyes on screens, feet marching to an invisible destination. We are a generation in intense hurry. We want faster internet, quicker deliveries, instant promotions and overnight success. But in this breathless race, we forgot to check our baggage. We threw out our values to run lighter and faster. They were too heavy to carry if we wanted to run fast and win the race. We have moved into an era where success has become the

ultimate goal, and the line between right and wrong has been completely blurred.

A New Currency of Admirations:

We used to live in a world where a person's word meant something. Integrity was a currency. Today that currency has

changed. Society no longer asks how you achieved something, it only asks what you achieved.

***"We are so obsessed with reaching the destination that we no longer care if the road we took was broken"*- Areeba Zulfiqar**

When we see a billionaire or a highflying corporate executive, what is the first thing that catches your eye? It's their net worth, their luxury cars, or their massive follower count. We look at a crown but we never question, the blood or dirt on it.

I remember a conversation I recently had with a classmate. We were taking a break between exams, and the discussion shifted to our future goals. I asked her, what she wanted to achieve in her life. She Saids, "I want to be a millionaire." I Asked: "that's great, but what kind of business or impact do you want to

create"? She replied, "honestly it does not matter. As long as it makes money fast, I'll do it."

That conversation stayed with me for weeks. It was a mirror to our collective reality. We have taught our youth to admire wealth more than honesty. Power more than kindness. If someone reaches the top, we idealize them. We host them on talk shows, and look up at them as icons.

No one asks how many people they did injustice to, how many lies they told, or how many rules did they compromise to get there. The results completely washed away all the sins of the process.

Success has become answer of every question.

"What do you want?"

"To be successful."

Nobody asks: *"what kind of person do you want to become before being successful?"*

The Slow Creep of the Shadow

This didn't happen overnight. It was not an explosion, it was a slow, silent erosion. It grew as society gradually began to care only about success, not how it was achieved. When you reward a child only when they get an "A" grade, without praising them

efforts or honesty. You quietly teach them that cheating is acceptable as long as grade is an “A”. When a corporate company praises a sales manager for achieving a huge goal, even though he cheated helpless customers to do it. It sends a clear message:

Result matter, moral don’t.

I remember my conversation with my mother, after my exams. I said to her that I’m so happy because I’ve completed my 11 years of study honestly. Guess what she said? She said “Who cares about honesty now days Areeba!”. That really struck me. I realized: **Results matter, no matter how you get it.**

Look at history’s biggest corporate disasters, consider the collapse of Enron in the early 2000s, or more recently Theranos. These were not mistakes made my uneducated people. These companies were filled with the brightest minds from the world’s top universities.

They only cared about the numbers going up and ignored the corruption.

We see this every single day on a smaller scale fake reviews bought by businesses, filtered lives displayed by influencers, politicians making promise they know they will break tomorrow.

As **Martin Luther King Jr.** Once profoundly warned.

"Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided man."

We have built a world that is technologically brilliant but morally bankrupt. We can map the entire globe with satellites, but we can no longer navigate our own moral compass.

The Cost of Convenience:

Why did we let this happen? Because being "good" is inconvenient. Honesty takes time. Building a clean business takes years of grit. Standing up for what is right often means standing alone. In a world that demands instant gratification, doing things the right way feels like taking the stairs when everyone else is riding the elevator.

We have made survival synonymous with ruthlessness. We tell ourselves "If I don't lie, someone else will, and take my place" or "business is business, it's nothing personal." These small, daily justifications are the bricks with which we have built our current reality. We have not become evil monsters; we have just become numb. We look at a corrupt system and instead of changing it, we focus on how we can exploit it, to our own advantage.

The Final Echo:

BLURRED LINES BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG

Let's take a step from the world and look closely at ourselves. This Book is not a lecture: it is a mirror.

When you open your social media feed and see someone flexing their wealthy lifestyle. What's your immediate, raw reaction?

Is it to question their character or is it a quiet pang of envy? When you hear about someone who took a shortcut, to get a promotion or a contract, do you feel genuine anger or do you secretly wonder if you should do the next same next time?

We have arrived at a very strange, dangerous moment in human history. We live in a time where being "successful" feels like an absolute necessity for survival. The world changed while we were too busy winning the race. We got the wealth, we got the power, we got the speed. But as you turn these pages you must ask yourself, the most uncomfortable question:

"In the process of gaining the world, what exactly did we lose?"

CHAPTER:02

Who Decides Right and Wrong

Since childhood we have been drawing a line with “right” on one side and “wrong” on the other. But have you ever paused to think about whose hand is holding the pencil that draws this line? Who decides that an action considered a sin today might become an accepted custom tomorrow? There is no universal remote control for right and wrong. This decision is shaped by time, circumstances and the powerful forces that govern our lives.

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”.

-William Shakespeare.

Below are different spheres that shape and decide our morality.

1.society and culture: (The Unwritten Rulebook)

First and fore most comes our society. The environment we are born into teaches us the difference between right and wrong through its unwritten rules.

This is because we enter this world as a **“tabula rasa”-** a blank slate.

We are born with no pre-written code, no moral compass, and no definitions of good or evil. We are like a fresh white paper.

If a child is born in one culture, their blank slate is filled with certain values; if the same child were born across the ocean in a completely different society, their page would be written with entirely different rules.

For Instance, think about a wolf child: Imagine a human baby abandoned in a deep forest, adopted and raised entirely by a pack of wolves. That child will never learn human language, or human morals. To survive, they might violently hunt down a helpless deer.

Now ask yourself: Is that child doing something ‘wrong’ or ‘sinful’?

In the eyes of wolves, it is perfectly right because it means survival. In the eyes of human society, violence is wrong. If the child only knows the ways of the forest, which moral rulebook

applies to them? This proves that right and wrong are not born inside us; they are completely painted onto our blank slate by the world around us.

2. Religion and Faith: (the Divine Compass)

For a huge portion of the world's population, the ultimate decision of right and wrong comes from their faith. This is the boundary line that stands far above the human desire- it is divine law.

While society tries to right its own tools on our blank slate, religion and faith awaken something deeper in us: our **Fitrah-**the natural innate compass that creator has placed inside every human soul.

Society can change its definition of right and wrong, but divine law connects us back to the ultimate, unchangeable truth. It provides a boundary line that stands far above human desires and temporary cultural trends.

The example of changings Morals:

Think about how human society changes its mind. A hundred years ago, certain behaviors were considered deeply wrong and shameful by almost every culture on Earth. Today, those same

behaviors are celebrated and protected by law in many countries.

Now ask yourself: If right and wrong are only decided by humans, does that mean morality has an expiry date?

This is where the divine compass becomes powerful. Human logic shifts with time, but divine law remains an anchor. It tells us that something is permanently right and permanently wrong, no matter what year it is or what society thinks, without this divine anchor, humanity would be completely lost in a sea of endless confusion.

3. law and state; (the law of the land)

As societies grow larger and more complex, formal laws and established to maintain order**.** But does being legal automatically make something morally, right? To understand this, we have to look at what philosophers call **"The social contract".** it is unwritten deal between humans and the government. Long ago we gave up a part of our absolute freedom to the state, and in return, the state promised to protect us through formal laws. So, the law was created to keep us safe.

But history shows us that law and true morality are two very different lines. A court can only decide what is lawful, not what is justice.

Think about the turning points of history;

There is a time when slavery was perfectly legal, protected by the state, and back by the law of the land. Anyone who helped a slave escaped was legally a “Criminal”

Now ask yourself; who was doing the “right” thing?

The citizen who followed the law and ignored the suffering of others, or the “criminal” who broke the law to save a human life?

This completely shatters the idea that law equals morality. Sometime, the worst crimes in history were done legally under the protection of the state. It makes us realize that a citizen’s true duty is not just blindly follow the law but to always question if the law itself is right.

“Law can only maintain peace, not justice. To truly do justice, a person needs a conscience that runs deeper than any legal code” -**Areeba Zulfiqar**

4.Your conscience: (The inner voice)

Afterall the outside influences are cleared away; we are left with the most crucial decision maker of all: your conscience. It is the ultimate court inside our minds where no lies can survive. Even

when the whole world tells you that a wrong is right. Your conscience stands alone and speaks the truth.

Imagine: A person who works for a powerful, corrupt system. Everyone around them- their Boss, their colleagues, and even the law tells them to sign a paper that will falsely ruin an innocent person's life. If they refuse, they lose their jobs and their family faces poverty. The outside world gives them a hundred justifications to sign it, saying "it's just business, everyone does it".

Ask yourself: What happens when they lock themselves in a dark room alone?

The noise of the world fades away, but that quiet whisper inside their chest starts screaming. The state says its legal, society says its necessary, but their conscience says it's is a crime. That inner voice cannot be bribed by money or fooled by logic. It remains pure, hurting them with guilt because it refuses to accept a lie. The tragedy is that humans often try to deafen themselves to this perfect guide.

"When every path in the world looks blurry look inside yourself. The conscience never lies; we just tend to turn down its volume." **-Areeba Zulfiqar.**

The Final Echo:

The final decision of what is right and what is wrong does not belong to a single entity or institution. It is a complex mixture cooked up by the religion, law, society and your personal life experiences. When these powerful forces clash with one another, the lines between right and wrong become completely blurred. In those difficult moments a person is left confused, struggling to decide whether to listen to society, follow the law, or simply trust their own heart.

If doing the right thing makes you criminal in the eyes of the world, do you still have the courage to do it?

CHAPTER: 03

WHEN WRONG FEELS RIGHT?

We now live in the age of **Convenient Morality**. This is a time when traditional values are twisted to fit personal needs, and wrong actions are hidden behind attractive, trendy labels:

- Lying is called strategy.
- Cheating is called smartness.
- Betrayal is called moving on.

People no longer justify their actions by truth: instead, they justify them by comfort. If something helps them win, it instantly becomes 'right' in their eyes.

The real danger in today's world is not just that people do wrong. It's that they no longer recognize it as wrong.

Here are the everyday moments where we can clearly see how wrong has, smoothly started to feel completely right:

1. The School Report Card:

Think about a student who cheats on a test and gets an A+. Everyone claps, gives them rewards and makes them feel proud.

But, look at the student who studies honestly and gets a C. they are met with sad, disappointed faces. This teaches children that only the grade matters, not how you get it. When society rewards that result of cheating, the act of cheating itself starts to feel right.

2. The Traffic Signal:

When people stop at a red light on an empty street, others sometimes look at them like they are wasting time. But the driver who breaks the signal and speeds away is called 'smart and fast'. We break small rules just to save two minutes and instead of feeling guilty, we feel happy about it. We convince ourselves that being faster is better than being 'right'.

3. The Fruit Seller:

A shopkeeper puts the brightest, freshest fruit on the top of pile, but hides the bruised and bad one underneath. When caught,

they don't call it a lie: they just call it a clever "business trick". As the philosopher **Alasdair Macintyre** noted:

"The world changes according to our Habit of description".

By simply changing the name of a deceitful to a “business trick” the wrong action suddenly feels like a smart acceptable choice.

4. The New Rule of Society:

Today, being a “good” person feels like a choice, but being successful feels like a rule. We care so much about money and status that doing the right thing is seen as an obstacle. If an action brings wealth, our minds immediately change its label from ‘wrong’ to ‘necessary’.

5. The Family Dinner:

At big family gatherings, the richest relative is always given the best seat, the most respect and the loudest welcome. Regardless of how they earned money. Without saying a single word, we

teach our students and children what we truly value: wealth over character.

“Relativity applies to physics, not ethics”. **Albert Einstein.**

The Ultimate Blindspot:

When we twist the rules so many times for our own comfort, our inner voice eventually stops correcting us. We start believing that

if everyone is doing it, it must be okay. **Saint Augustine** strictly reminded us:

'Right is Right even if no one is doing it; Wrong is wrong even everyone is doing it".

The Final Echo:

When we reshape our morality to fit our convenience we might win the short-term victories. We might get the top grades, the quick promotions or the social status. But when wrong starts to feel right, we don't just change the rules, we completely lose our conscience.

If the wrong thing makes you feel smart or successful, have you actually won?

CHAPTER:04

LOVE, LOYALTY AND BETRAYAL

If you sit in a gathering or scroll through any social media feed today, you will see a different kind of rush. It is the rush to find connection. But just like our careers, our relationships have also transitioned into an era of convenience. We are a generation that makes promises easily but breaks them faster. We say “forever” without understanding the wait of the word. We give people hope without taking any responsibility for their hearts and the moment, things get difficult we walk away without guilt. In this fast -paced race, the line between what is right and what is wrong in love has been completely erased.

We created a culture where people are treated like software updates. Easily replaceable the moment a newer or smoother

option comes along. We no longer fix what is broken, we simply throw it and move on.

The bystander's view:

I have never stepped onto the fragile track of these relationships myself. I don't need to. Sometimes, the best way to understand a car crash is to watch it from outside. As a bystander, I have watched those closest to me shatter into pieces because they trusted the wrong person. I have sat in those people who were completely empty, hollowed by the very same persons they once had for comfort.

I remember a very close friend who gave her sincerity, time and dignity to someone she believed was her anchor. She believed old rules of loyalty. She believed that when you give your words to someone, it becomes an unwritten contract of life-long loyalty. But when the first storm came, that person did not just leave, they choose comfort over commitment. They left her standing in the wreckage of their shared memories. Walked away as if nothing had happened, as if the years they spent together were just a temporary phase.

What shatters more in modern betrayal is not the exit itself. The departure is painful. But the true sorrow is in the realization that to the betrayer, their actions were not even wrong. They did not lose a night's sleep. They did not question their integrity.

As the saying goes:

"The saddest thing about betrayal is that it never comes from your enemies".

Ghost of Promises:

Take a look at the promises people throw around easily even within the closest family where trust should be everything. I once saw a situation. There was a person someone we called our own who used to make the promises of life-long loyalty. They used to say that nothing in the world can ever change their heart, and that they would stand by their words no matter what. Everyone in the family believed them blindly.

But the moment, the glitter of money and the better option came their way family bonds broke in a second.

Without any hesitation, guilt or respect for the years spent together that person casually walked away.

It was not a choice forced by their parents or bad times. What hurt even more is how they act today as if nothing ever happened, as if those heavy promises were spoken in dreams. They crossed the line between right and wrong so easily just for money.

C.S Lewis once wrote:

"A promise is a serious thing. It holds a piece of your truth".

But today, truth is subjective. If a moral boundary does not suit our current mood or lifestyle, we simply blur it, until it disappears.

We are living among ghosts of promises that were never meant to be kept breathing in an air thick with unfulfilled words.

The Final Echo:

We love to play victim. We love to look at the world and complaint about how cruel and heartless people have become. But we conveniently forget that the world is just a mirror reflecting our own collective, selfish choices.

Are you really searching for loyalty or just waiting for your turn?

CHAPTER:05

ILLUSION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

"Comparison is the thief of joy" **Theodore Roosevelt**

A World That Looks Perfect:

We are living in an age where reality is no longer enough.

Today people do not only live their lives; they also display them. Every photograph, every story, every post becomes a carefully selected piece of a much larger picture. The problem is that this picture is often incomplete.

Social media has created a world that looks beautiful, successful and perfect. We see smiling faces, expensive vacations, luxury lifestyles, healthy relationships, dream jobs and endless celebrations. At first glance it seems as if everyone is living the life they wanted.

But reality is often very different. Behind many smiling faces are sleepless nights. Behind many success stories are years of

failures. Behind perfect relationships are misunderstandings that no one talks about. The camera captures a single moment, but it never captures the entire story. The greatest illusion is that people show only the parts of life they want the world to see.

This is where the confusion begins. When people repeatedly see perfection, they slowly begin to believe that perfection is normal. And when perfection becomes the standard, reality starts looking like a failure.

"A perfect profile cannot hide an empty heart". **-Areeba Zulfiqar**

The Silent Pressure of Comparison:

Every generation faces challenges, but comparison has never been easier than it is today. A few seconds of scrolling are enough to make someone question their appearance, their career, their relationships or even their self- worth. Someone buys a new car. Someone gets married. Someone graduates. Someone travels abroad. Someone starts a successful business.

Within minutes, thousands of people watch these moments. Many congratulate them sincerely, while others quietly begin

comparing their own lives. They ask themselves questions that slowly steel their piece.

"Why I am not there yet?"

"Why is my life so ordinary?"

"Why does everyone else seems happier than me?"

The problem is comparison. People compare their ordinary life to someone else's extraordinary moments. They compare their struggles with someone else's achievements. They compare their behind- the- scene reality with someone else's carefully edited highlights.

"Comparison made under such conditions can never be fair."

One thing I have observed is that people rarely compare their lives with those who have less. They always compare themselves with those who have more or appears to have more. Sometimes, comparison quietly destroys gratitude.

One of the biggest changes social media has brought is the way people define **Success.**

Years ago, success was connected to character, education, kindness, honesty and meaningful relationships. Today, success is measured through visibility.

How many followers do you have?

How many likes did your picture received

How many people viewed your story?

These numbers have become a source of confidence for many people.

But numbers cannot measure character.

A post can become viral without containing any truth.

A person can become famous without being honest.

Popularity and integrity are not always the same. This is one of the blurred lines between right and wrong. When appearance becomes more valuable than authenticity, people slowly stop asking about something is right.

Act of kindness become content.

Friendships become photographs.

Achievements become competitions.

Even happiness sometimes becomes a performance.

***"The strongest filter is not applied on the face; it is applied to the truth."*-Areeba Zulfiqar.**

I have often noticed people spending more time trying to capture a perfect moment instead of having it. Families sit together while everyone looks at a different screen. Friends meet after months, yet most of them spent taking pictures instead of creating memories. Beautiful places are visited, but instead of enjoying the nature, many people become busy finding the perfect angle for a photograph. It made me wonder whether we are preserving memories or just collecting proof that we were there.

The Hidden Reality Behind the Screen:

One of the greatest mistakes people make is believing that social media tells the whole story.

It does not.

This is why; we should never judge their lives by their online presence.

We only see the chapter they choose to publish. We never see the pages they quietly turn away.

The truth is simple.

Every human being is fighting a battle that the world cannot fully see.

The digital world often hides those battles behind beautiful pictures, attractive captions and carefully edited videos. If we forget this reality, we begin believing an illusion. And every illusion pushes us one step further away from the truth.

"The need to be admired should never become greater than the courage to be authentic."- Areeba Zulfiqar.

When Right Becomes Wrong:

Social media is neither completely good nor completely bad. It can educate, inspire, connect families and spread awareness. At the same time, it can also encourage comparison, insecurity and the desire to appear perfect.

When people hide their real selves to gain acceptance, the line between right and wrong slowly disappears.

Choosing Reality Over Illusion's:

The solution is not to leave social media. The solution is to use it wisely.

Share your achievements, but stay humble. Celebrate your success, but remember your struggles. Use technology to

connect with people, not to compete with them. Most importantly, never let your online identity become more important than your real character. People may remember your pictures for a few seconds, but they will remember your character for a lifetime.

***"A perfect profile may impress the world, but an honest character earns genuine respect."-* Areeba Zulfiqar.**

The Final Echo:

Social media is only a tool. It becomes helpful or harmful depending on the way we use it. The challenge of this generation is not learning how to create a perfect image. The real challenge is having the courage to remain authentic in a world that constantly rewards appearances.

When we choose honesty over attention, truth over popularity and character over image, we protect ourselves from illusions.

Because the moment appearance becomes more valuable than authenticity, the blurred lines between right and wrong become almost impossible to recognize.

CHAPTER:06

THE SILENCE OF GOOD

I remember sitting in my board exam, trying to focus on my own paper. A girl sitting in front of me was wearing a scarf. At first, noting seemed unusual. But after a few minutes, I noticed something strange. She kept whispering questions, one after another…… and writing continuously. It didn't feel normal. It felt like someone was feeding her answers, maybe there were AirPods hidden beneath her scarf. I saw everything. And yet……

I said nothing.

Not because I thought cheating was okay. But simply because I didn't want to be noticed. I did not want to be on someone's hate list. So, I chose silence. But then a question stayed with me. ***If we stay silent, when we see something clearly wrong……***

Are we still, right?

The quiet majority:

The truth is the world is not filled with bad peoples. Most people around us are actually good. They mind their own

business, work hard want to live an honest, peaceful life. But a huge majority of these good people share one common habit. They choose to stay completely silent. They see unfair things happening on the streets, but they don't react.

They notice wrong doing but they look down at their phones and pretend they did not see it. They always wonder why bad things spread so fast but we rarely ask: ***Why do good people stay so quiet?***

The Price of Speaking Up:

Let's be honest: standing up for what is right is hard, and it rarely comes with reward. When you speak up against a wrong, people don't usually clap for you. Instead, you get judged, rejected and suddenly feel very lonely. Society has this weird habit of turning against the person who points out the problem you get labeled as a **troublemaker** or someone who creates unnecessary drama. Because of this fear, good people decide that keeping their mouth shut is the safest option. They convince themselves as long as they are still innocent.

"The further a society drifts from truth, the more it will hate those who speak it."- **George Orwell.**

But what happens when everyone takes a step back? **Albert Einstein** explains this perfectly:

"The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of those who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."

When good people stay quiet out of fear, bad things don't just happen- they grow. Evil doesn't win because it is stronger; it wins because goodness decides to hide.

The Bystander Effect: Waiting for Someone Else:

This silence is not just limited to an exam hall. It's actually a deep flaw in how human mind works. Psychologists call it **"The Bystander Effect."** It basically means that the more people there are witnessing a bad situation, the less likely any single person is to help. Everyone stands around a circle, looking at each other, thinking, "someone else will handle it."

The most famous and heartbreaking example of this happened in 1964 with the murder **Kitty Genovese** in **New York**. A young woman was attacked and stabbed on a public street for over thirty minutes. She screamed and begged for help in the middle of the night. Later, reports showed that dozens of her neighbors actually heard her cries or watched from their windows. Yet,

almost nobody did anything. No one ran down to help, and nobody even called the police until it was too late.

Everyone just assumed someone else would take action. That collective silence cost is an innocent girl her life.

"The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by good people." -Martin Luther King Jr.

The Final Echo:

We like to comfort ourselves by thinking we are good people just because we don't actively hurt anyone. We sleep peacefully knowing we have not stolen, cheated or lied. But as a writer, and as someone who silently observes this world, I have realized that just "not doing wrong" is not enough.

***"Our sin is not just the wrong we actively commit, but also the truth we choose to ignore when we close Our eyes." –* Areeba Zulfiqar.**

When we see a wrong – whether it's a student cheating in an exam room or a bigger injustice in our daily life- and we choose to say nothing, we are not being neutral. Silence is a choice. But not standing against the wrong, we quietly give it permission to

exist and grow. Wrong things don’t need armies to take over the world; they just need the silence of the good.

CHAPTER:07

IS BEING GOOD STILL WORTH IT?

I don't remember the first time I asked this question. Maybe it happened after seeing an honest people ignored and after watching someone succeed through dishonesty. I only remember the feeling. It felt unfair. And unfairness has a strange way of making us question our values. I remember thinking:

"What is the point of being good if this is how the world looks?"

It was not the first time I had seen something like this. And I know it will not be the last. Maybe you have seen it too. Someone cheats in an exam and gets the highest marks. Someone gets ahead by using people. Someone lies during an interview and gets the job. Meanwhile, the person who choose honesty is left wondering whether they make the wrong choice. That is when this question quietly enters the mind:

"Is being good still worth it?"

It is one of the hardest questions we can ask. Because when dishonest succeed and honest people struggle, our values begin to shake. We start wondering if goodness is simply making life harder. Maybe honesty is old- fashioned. Maybe kindness is for fools. Maybe the world only rewards those who know how to take shortcuts. These thoughts are uncomfortable. But they are real.

"Does an emerald lose its beauty for lack of praise?" -Marcus Aerelius.

That question carries more wisdom than it seems. An emerald does not become ordinary because nobody notices it. Its value never depended on people's opinions. Perhaps character is the same.

The Ship and the Sea:

A ship can spend years surrounded by water without sinking. It sinks only when the water enters it. The world is like the sea. Dishonesty, selfishness and greed are all around us. They cannot destroy us simply because they exist. They destroy us when we allow them to enter are own character perhaps the greatest danger is not living in a dishonest world. It is becoming dishonest because of it.

Goodness was Never a Business Deal:

Sometimes we treat goodness like an investment.

"I was kind."

"I was honest."

"So why didn't life reward me?

But being good was never a contract with the world. It was a commitment to yourself. The world doesn't always reward honesty. Sometimes it rewards confidence. Sometimes money. Sometimes influence. Sometimes luck. But none of this answer the question;

"Who are you when nobody's watching?"

Character does.

And character is built in private, long before it is seen in public.

"Never regret having a good heart,

Everything good, comes back to you. Multiplied."

Whether that return comes through people, through peace, or simply through the ability to live without pretending, it is never wasted.

The Greater Loss:

People often think losing money is failure. Or losing opportunities. Or losing status. But perhaps the greater loss is losing yourself while trying to gain everything else because success without integrity may impress strangers. It rarely brings peace.

The Final Echo:

The hardest prisons are not built with walls. They are built with guilt, fear and the constant need to hide the truth. The person who sacrifices their values for success may win everyone's applause. But eventually, they still have to live with themselves,

The real question is not:

"Does being good makes life easier?"

But it is:

"If becoming successful required you to become someone you would never respect……, would you still call it success?"

CHAPTER:08

FINDING YOUR OWN TRUTH

Throughout this book, I asked many questions. ***Has the world changed? Who decides what is right and wrong? Why do relationships break so easily? Is being good still worth it?*** I never wrote these chapters because I believed I had all the answers. I wrote them because I was searching too. The more I observed people, the more I realized that the biggest battle is not between good and evil. It is between **noise and conscience.**

Today the world is louder than ever. Everywhere we look, someone is telling us how to live. Social media tells us what success should look like. Friends tell us what is “normal”. Society tells us what deserves respect. Sometimes even our fears tell us what to do. After listening to so many voices, one thing quietly begins to disappear. **Our own conscience.** Conscience is a strange thing. It does not shout. It does not force us. It simply whispers. It tells us when something feels wrong, even if everyone around us says it is right. And sometimes it tells us to

do the right thing, even when no one else is watching. The problem is not that conscience has become silent. The problem is that the world has become too loud.

"The greatest man is he who does not lose his child's heart". **Mencius**

Perhaps we are not born without a conscience, perhaps we slowly learn to ignore it.

The Compass Within:

Imagine you are standing in the middle of a forest. There are hundreds of people walking in different directions. Each one is confident. Each one believes they are right. If you simply follow the crowd, you may never stop to ask where they are going. Now imagine you are holding a compass. The people around you may disagree it. Some may even laugh at it. But the compass does not change because the crowd changes. Our conscience is like that compass. It quietly points toward what we believe is right. Not what is easy. Not what is popular. Not what brings the fastest reward. A compass is most valuable when life becomes confusing. Anyone can make good choices when the path is clear. Character is revealed when every direction looks convincing.

There is another thing I have noticed. People rarely wake up morning and decide to become dishonest. It usually begins with one small compromise.

"It's only one lie". "Everyone else is doing it." "This is how the world works".

The second compromise becomes easier. Then the third. Slowly, what once felt wrong begins to feel normal. This is how conscience becomes quieter. Not because it disappeared. But because we stopped listening.

***"Conscience is the voice of the soul."*- Traditional Proverb**

Sometimes people ask how someone changes so much. The answer is often simple. They did not change in one day. They changed one decision at a time. The same is proved in the opposite direction. No great character is built overnight. It is built through small decisions no one applauds. Choosing honesty when lying would be easier. Choosing kindness when anger feels justified. Choosing integrity when nobody would ever know the difference. These moments seem small. But together, they shape the person we become. Maybe that is why finding your own truth is not about creating a new version of right and wrong. It is about

clearing away the noise until you can hear the quiet voice that help always been there. The voice that asks not,

"What will people think?"

But;

"Can I respect the person I become after this choice?

There was a time when I thought truth was something people gave us. Parents taught it. Teachers explained it. Books described it.

As I grew older, it realized something different. The world does not simply teach us what is right. Sometimes it confuses us. Some time it rewards the wrong people. Sometimes it makes us question everything we once believed. And perhaps that is why finding your own truth is not about inventing new values. It is about holding on to the right ones when letting go would be easier.

Throughout this book, I have talked about honesty, loyalty, kindness, social media, expectation, healing and the changing world. At first, they may see like different topics. But they all lead to the same place. **Character.**

Every chapter asked a different question. But every question pointed towards the same answer.

Who are you becoming?

Not what do you own. Not how successful you look. Not how many people admire you. But who are you when nobody is watching? perhaps that is the only question that truly matters.

The Person You Live with Forever:

We meet thousands of people throughout our lives. Some stay. Some leave. Some remember us. Some forget us. But there is one person we can never walk away from. **Ourselves.**

No achievements can replace self-respect. No amount of praise can silence a guilty conscience. No success feels complete if it costs the very values that defined us. People often spend years trying to build a perfect life. Very few spend years trying to build a perfect life. Maybe that is why some people have everything they once dreamed of…… and still feel empty.

"Waste no more time arguing what a good person should be. Be one."- **Marcus Aerelius.**

A Book Without Perfect Answers:

If you were expecting this book to tell you exactly what is right and what is wrong. I cannot. Life is more complicated than that. Every person has a different story. Every decision carries different consequences but I do believe one thing. Deep down, most of us already know the difference between convenience and conscience. The difficult part is not knowing. The difficult part is choosing. Every single day, again and again. That choice shapes a life more than talent, intelligence, or luck ever will.

Before you close this book: -

If there is one thing I hope you take from these pages, it is this:

Do not let the world decide your values for you.

Question what you see. Think before you follow. Listen before you judge and when life becomes confusing, return to the quiet voice within you. It may not be the loudest voice, but it is often the most honest one.

Perhaps finding your own truth was never about searching somewhere far away. Perhaps it was about becoming quite enough to hear conscience that has been guiding you all along.

Because in the end…….

People may remember your achievements. They may admire your success. They may even forget your name. but every choice you make leaves a mark on the person you become. And that person is the one you will live with for the rest of your life. So, before you ask whether the world is becoming a better place……

Ask yourself something much harder:

When the world asked you to compromise your values… did you protect your character, or did you protect your com.

About the Author

Areeba Zulfiqar is a young FSC pre-medical student, writer with a deep interest in philosophy, morality, and human behavior.

She believes that some of the most important conversations begin with simple questions.

Blurred Lines Between Right and Wrong is her first book. Through its pages, she invites readers to reflect on honesty, loyalty, conscience, relationships, and the values that shape our lives.

Rather than offering perfect answers, Areeba hopes her writing encourages people to think more deeply, question more honestly, and live more consciously.

When she is not writing, she enjoys observing everyday life, exploring meaningful ideas, and sharing her thoughts through her blog, https://thebyareebaofficial.blogspot.com

**** AreebaZulfiqar****

"Sometimes, the most powerful answers begin with the courage to ask a difficult question."

A Note to the Reader

If you have reached this page, thank you.

Thank you for giving your time to these thoughts. Thank you for walking through these questions with me. When I started writing this book, I was not searching for perfect answers. I was trying to understand the world a little better.

Along the way, I realized something. The world will continue to change. Standards will change. Opinions will change. People will change. But our character is a choice we make every single day. Perhaps that is the lesson I will carry with me long after writing this book. If these pages encouraged you to pause before making a decision...To think before following the crowd...Or to listen to your conscience a little more carefully...Then this book has achieved everything I hoped for.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

"Indeed, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves."
— Qur'an 13:11

Maybe changing the world begins with changing ourselves. Thank you for being part of this journey. I hope you leave this

book with more than just memories of its pages. I hope you leave with questions that continue to guide you.

With gratitude,

Areeba Zulfiqar.

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And finally, thank you to you, the reader.

Out of all the books you could have picked up, you chose this one.

I hope these pages do not simply give you something to read.

I hope they give you something to think about.

GENRE
PHILOSOPHICAL

BLURRED LINES BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG

BY AREEBA ZULFIQAR

We are not born knowing what is right.
We are not taught what is wrong.
Somewhere between choices and consequences,
between truth and comfort,
we lose sight of the line that separates them.

This book is not here to correct you.
It is here to question with you.
To walk with you through the silence
where answers don't come easily.
Where every choice leaves a mark,
and every heart carries a story untold.

Maybe there is no absolute right or wrong.
Maybe we are all just trying to do our best,
in a world that rarely makes it easy.

"I am a silent observer.
I have observed the world
crossing the line between
right and wrong so easily.
I have asked many questions
throughout this journey."

Not every answer brings peace.
Sometimes, questions do.